



DEFEATING BOKO HARAM: THE REALITY ON THE GROUND IS DECEPTIVE

Mr. David Doukhan

Ph.D. Student, Department of Political Sciences, Bar Ilan University

26 November 2015

ABSTRACT

In the beginning of 2015, the Federal Government of Nigeria decided to militarily tackle Boko Haram with the goal of annihilating the phenomenon. The decision was made for the following reasons: 1) the upcoming presidential elections; 2) the unprecedented success of Boko Haram in the North-East in conquering territories; 3) the unbearable degree of cruelty towards the local population shown by the group; 4) the leak of the war into neighboring countries, which threatened the area's stability. As a result of this decision, it seems - according to reports, specifically from military sources - that Boko Haram is losing ground and is suffering from heavy casualties. If this is true, this is good news; there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Nevertheless, since doubts on the credibility of the information remain in the background, it is suggested to wait a while before claiming military victory over Boko Haram. Defeating the group, from a military point of view, doesn't mean that the Boko Haram phenomenon has passed and the North-East problems are over; the extremist ideology and the jihadi spirit are still there as well as the socio-economic differences, tribal and religion tensions, poverty and lack of basic infrastructure, etc. - all factors that empowered the insurgency. The Nigerian government, in order to bring this area back to its full control and influence has much to do in various fields, to show and convince, especially the autochthons that with the army they can sustain the North-East area for long-term and change life conditions there.

* The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

Forward

Shortly after being elected as the new Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari swore that his new government will eradicate Boko Haram: "Enough is enough" he said and added: "What I can pledge, with absolute certainty, is that from the first day of my administration, Boko Haram will know the strength of our collective will and commitment to rid this nation of terror, and bring back peace and normalcy to all the affected areas."¹ In the modern history of war against terrorism only one successful case in eradicating a terrorist organization can be stated, the case of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) organization in Sri Lanka. In fact, once it was decided to annihilate the organization at any price, Sri Lankan leaders did so through a brutal military campaign that lasted just under 30 months. The Sri Lankan military eliminated one of the world's most effective terror organizations, an organization that had perfected the use of suicide bombers.² Could it be the same with Boko Haram?

Based on this firm approach, when he was sworn in on 29 May 2015, the Nigerian President emphasized that the government will "do what it takes" to defeat the extremist violence of Boko Haram's insurgency in three months.³ In his speech he noted that: "The activities of these misguided groups and individuals have resulted in wanton destruction of

¹ How we will stop Boko Haram, by Muhammadu Buhari, *Vanguard*, April 15, 2015.

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/how-we-will-stop-boko-haram-by-muhammadu-buhari/>

²The Tamil terrorist organization in Sri Lanka was founded in May 1976 by Velupillai Prabhakaran; it waged a secessionist nationalist insurgency to create a mono-ethnic independent state in the north and East of Sri Lanka for the Tamil people. Most of the financing was obtained from donations from Tamilians abroad. The number of people killed in the struggle that ended in 2009 is estimated at about 70,000. For more information refer to: Sharika Thiraganama, *In My Mother's House: Civil War in Sri Lanka* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) p. 108; Kjell-Åke Nordquist, *Gods and Arms: On Religion and Armed Conflict* (UK: Lutterworth Press Publishers, 2013) p. 97.

³It is important to define the term insurgency. Insurgency is the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify or challenge political control of a region. It is primarily a political and territorial struggle, in which both sides use armed forces to create space for their political ? influence activities to be effective. Insurgency is not always conducted by a single group with a centralized, military style command structure, but may involve different actors with various aims, loosely connected in networks. This definition, in my opinion, is applicable to Boko Haram. Refer to: *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide*, January 2009, p. 2.

lives and properties of our citizens as a disruption of socio-economic lives of millions of Nigerians," the President added: "You need to brace up and continue to team up with other stakeholders to come up with a well-coordinated joint effort which will bring a desired end to these insurgencies within three months."⁴ He bluntly called on the U.S. to ease its restrictions on providing the weapons that his military needed in order to prevail in the fight.⁵

It is clear that Buhari's approach to resolve the crisis in the North-East leans on the assumption of increasing the deployment of military forces and regional military cooperation which will enable to conduct more effectively, military operations against the group and its supporters, operations that will weaken the group. The escalation of Boko Haram's operations in the North-East and subsequently the threats they posed to neighboring countries-strengthen decisions taken to restore order in the North-East and to stop Boko Haram activities. At the same time, they radiate ambiguity and confusion.

On the one hand, without any doubt, the national security environment of Nigeria and its integrity has undergone a dramatic shift by Boko Haram activities; on the other hand, represented by the law, the use of force is prohibited and it is not clear if the Nigerian Army is

⁴Michael Kaplan, Buhari charges Nigeria's military chiefs to defeat Boko Haram in 3 months, *Premium Times*, September 16, 2015 <http://odili.net/news/source/2015/sep/18/600.html>; On September 18, 2015 the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt. General Tukur Y. Buratai, said that the military would meet the three-month deadline given to it by President Muhammadu Buhari to end Boko Haram's insurgency. He made the disclosure while fielding questions from newsmen shortly after declaring the Nigerian Army Finance Corps 10th Biennial Training Conference held in Kaduna is open. Buratai remarked that as long as the military is winning the war on a daily basis, it would certainly meet the deadline. Refer to: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/188316-buhari-charges-nigerias-military-chiefs-to-defeat-boko-haram-in-3-months.html>

⁵ The U.S.'s application of the Leahy Law, bars American assistance to foreign security force units where there is credible evidence of gross human rights violations. Refer to: Nina M. Serafino et al., "Leahy Law" Human Rights Provisions and Security Assistance: Issue Overview, Congressional Research Service (January 29, 2014), pp. 1-2. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43361.pdf> ; Amnesty International, published on 2 June 2015, a report (Index number: AFR 44/1657/2015) in which Nigerian military forces have extra judicially executed more than 1,200 people; they have arbitrarily arrested at least 20,000 people, mostly young men and boys and have committed countless acts of torture. Hundreds, if not thousands of Nigerians have become victims of enforced disappearance; and at least 7,000 people have died in military detention. Refer to (133 pages): <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/1657/2015/en/>

capable of doing so. The law is based on international law and institutional arrangements that today govern the international use of force and inspire the norms and structures established by the U.N. Charter at the end of World War II - which means many restrictions on the use of force.⁶ This situation is the core issue at the center of many academic debates.

Nigeria, as the largest democracy in Africa and a U.N. member state, is constrained to operate against terrorism within the framework of these international rules. Since the end of World War II, the world has shifted towards human rights, an issue that has become the core issue in all debates. Human rights laws have been anchored in the constitutions of many democratic countries; today it is difficult to violate these rights. The war on terror, by nature, leads to the violation of human rights.⁷ In the framework of the debate, Jane Stromseth, for example, argues that "the rules and the system [governing the use of force] need refining and reform" and urges adjustments to our understanding of the right of self-defense and the role of regional arrangements in addressing today's urgent threats. John Yoo and Will Trachman are more categorical: "today [. . .] the United Nations' rules on the use of force have become obsolete"⁸ and that "modern warfare demands that states enjoy more flexibility in the use of force than that permitted under a strict reading of the U.N. Charter's rules."⁹

However, Boko Haram's insurgency is not something that can be resolved or eradicated with just the army, the police or the security agencies. Rather, it must be done in parallel, with

⁶ Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice (San Francisco, 1945), Chapter VII: Action with respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression.

⁷ Asa Kasher and Amos Yadlin, "Military Ethics of Fighting Terror: An Israeli 2 Perspective", *Journal of Military Ethics* Vol.4: No.1 (2005), pp. 3-32, 60-70.

⁸ John C. Yoo & Will Trachman, Less than Bargained for: The Use of Force and the Declining Relevance of the United Nations (*Chicago Journal of International Law* Vol. 5 No. 2, 2005), pp.379-381.

⁹Ibid. p. 394.

the use of other means that do not have military characteristics, but rather civilian.¹⁰ A 'Marshal Plan' should be designed by the Nigerian authorities for the North-East, comprising special economic programmes for the affected states of the North-East, and focusing on rehabilitation, resettlement and reconstruction, as well as on the need for the relevant governors of the North-East states and indeed of the entire North, to address the issues of vocational and skills-acquisition education for youths.¹¹

The North-East problems should not be seen as purely security problems, this would be a mistake. Nigeria suffers from a variety of and severe problems at different levels that threatens its stability and sovereignty such as:

- Corruption: the number one problem – it is everywhere.¹²
- Crime and terrorism: specifically Boko Haram's insurgency, tension and violence between tribes due to survival matters or religious motifs, are daily occurrences.
- Unemployment: official Nigerian statistics state that 38% of those under 24 are unemployed, but the World Bank estimates this number to be closer to 80%.¹³
- Education and university systems: corruption in the Nigerian educational system is common, particularly in universities where it is endemic. The illiteracy rate is 78.6%.¹⁴
- The Environment: Nigeria's environmental problems are typical of developing states.

Excessive cultivation has resulted in loss of soil fertility. Oil spills, the burning of toxic

¹⁰ Refer to my article: Can the ISWAP (Islamic State Western Africa Province) alias Boko Haram be Eradicated? 2.9.2015.

¹¹ The Marshall Plan (officially the European Recovery Program, ERP) was an American initiative to aid Western Europe, in which the United States gave \$13 billion (approximately \$130 billion in current dollar value as of August 2015) in economic support to help rebuild Western European economies after the end of World War II.

¹² Transparency International classified Nigeria in 2014, 136 out 174 surveyed countries. <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>

¹³ See at: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/nigeria>

¹⁴ National Literacy Survey, June, 2010, *National Bureau of Statistics*. (5 September 2015).

wastes and urban air pollution are problems in more developed areas.¹⁵ Water pollution is also a problem due to improper handling of sewage.

- Infrastructure: in Nigeria the quality and availability of infrastructure networks significantly impacts economic growth. Nigeria suffers from a lack of safe public water supply and a lack of reliable electricity power supply. This has had a negative effect on the health and life of the people, as well on industries.
- Gender: many people in Nigeria still believe that only men should be in positions of power. Women in Nigeria face discrimination and violence. Unemployment in Nigeria greatly affects the women.
- Territorial dispute with neighbors: Nigeria has been involved in 18 border disputes since its independence in 1960 with her close neighbours, Benin, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and Niger. Disputes were largely dealt with by diplomacy and negotiation. The International Court of Justice arbitrated in some disputes and in 2002, the court granted sovereignty over Bakassi to Cameroon.¹⁶

The problems described make it difficult for the state to provide security, education, and governance, which lead to the following conclusions: 1) the situation is a ticking time bomb; 2) has Nigeria fallen into the 'failed state' category?

Robert Rotberg in his book *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* argues that "Nation-states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver

¹⁵ Amnesty International reported that Nigeria experiences hundreds of oil spills per year in the Niger Delta, largely due to pipe erosion, sabotage, and neglect by oil companies. See at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/nigeria/report-nigeria/>

¹⁶See at *CIA-World Facts Book*: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2070.html>

positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose legitimacy, and the very nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes illegitimate in the eyes and in the hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens."¹⁷ Robert also wrote that: "Failed states are tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous, and contested bitterly by warring factions. In most failed states, government troops battled armed revolts led by one or more rivals."¹⁸ The quotes above correctly describe the situation in Nigeria. The Crisis States Research Centre (CSRC) defines a "failed state" as a condition of "state collapse" – i.e., a state that can no longer perform its basic security and development functions and that has no effective control over its territory. This definition puts Nigeria on a high alert of falling to the failed state list (ranked 14th – among 178 countries in 2015).¹⁹

As a result of the bleak and dangerous situation, it is agreed that Nigerian populaces expressed in electing Buhari, a hope that the new government will be on the proper path towards addressing their long frustration as well as ameliorating their life conditions and tackling Boko Haram.

It would not be wrong to describe Nigeria's political process in its current form as an 'enamored' with favor culture, which breeds poor governance, incompetence, impunity, lack of accountability, gross inequality, and disenfranchisement of a significant number of its citizenry from any meaningful pursuits. This promotes wanton corruption - the inability to differentiate public trust from private treasury - and it is a potent challenge to the rule of law, the civil society and the effectiveness of public institutions. It is this inability to differentiate public trust and

¹⁷ Robert I. Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (U.S.: Princeton University Press, 2003), p.1.

¹⁸Ibid. p.5.

¹⁹The Fund for Peace publications, Washington, D.C., The Fragile States Index examines 178 countries, across 12 social, economic, and political indicators (and 100 sub-indicators) of pressures experienced by countries. <http://fsi.fundforpeace.org/rankings-2015>

private treasury in the political landscape over decades, which gave the impetus to different kinds of extreme ideologies. It is within this landscape that Boko Haram raised.

Tackling Boko Haram

In confronting Boko Haram's insurgency, different matters must be addressed for an effective response to the insurgency, such as:

- 1) Properly articulated security efforts.
- 2) There needs to be a different kind of politics in the North-East, where state and federal government work together instead of against each other, and where there is a much more common and agreed agenda about what needs to be done to correct many years of mis-governance and poor policy in the North-East.²⁰ One of the most astonishing phenomenons in the counterinsurgency measures taken by the federal government is the opposition in Borno State and other Northern states of 'Borno Elders Forum' (NEF). NEF openly opposed the war on Boko Haram as they see it as 'a war against Muslims'. They accused the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan of deliberately allowing Boko Haram to massacre the people of North-East Nigeria.²¹

²⁰ In order to have a deeper knowledge about state capacity, governance issues, including public financial management and civil services, it's recommended to read the World Bank Report: State and Local Governance in Nigeria. See: Joel D. Barkan, Alex Gboyega, Mike Stevens, Task Team Leader, *State and Local Governance in Nigeria* (Public Sector and Capacity Building Program, Africa Region- The World Bank, August 2, 2001). http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/5783/State_and_Governance_Nigeria.htm

²¹ Borno Elders Forum, led by Gaji Galtimari, a retired ambassador, is a forum of prominent retired officials including Muslim theocracy leaders. The forum had in several statements not hidden its soft spot for the sect which in the past six years has killed, maimed and displaced thousands in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, among others. The NEF recently called to bring former President Goodluck Jonathan to the International Criminal Court of Justice at The Hague to face charges of genocide against the people of the North-East. The NEF said the confession by the Chief of Defence Staff, Alex Badeh, a retired Air Vice Marshall, that he presided over an ill-equipped military during his tenure, has exposed the wicked motives of the federal government of Nigeria under President Goodluck Jonathan to annihilate the northeast region by pushing soldiers to fight Boko Haram with faulty weapons. Refer to footnote no. 20. See also at: Borno Elders' Love for Boko Haram, *Scan News*, August 13, 2015.

3) Developmental and economic uplift agenda. Too many in the North-East, particularly young people, are not only without employment but because of the insurgency are without any economic prospects whatsoever.²² No one can live without hope and indeed if the economic and the developmental aspects of these are not addressed, the opportunities for radicalisation are much greater.

4) Implementing of CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) measures policy (conflict prevention, de-radicalisation, education, inter-religious dialogue, as well as social and economic development) in parallel with military targeted operations. Threats from terrorism becomes more diffusive, networked, and transnational. To have adequate tools of counterterrorism policymakers and practitioners who focus more on preventing countering radicalization and recruitment and improving the resilience of individuals and communities against the appeal of violent extremism. Reflective of these trends, efforts on countering violent extremism (CVE) have emerged in a relatively short period as an increasingly important instrument in the counterterrorism tool kit as an integral part of their wider strategic objectives on countering terrorism.²³

Hence, it is crucial to understand the roots of the violent extremism in the North-East which describes the beliefs and actions of people supporting or using violence to achieve

<http://scannewsnigeria.com/news/orno-elders-love-for-boko-haram/>; in a meeting with President Buhari the NEF representative asked him to declare amnesty for Boko Haram insurgents. "Grant amnesty to Boko Haram, Northern elders tell Buhari," *Vanguard*, May 23, 2015. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/05/grant-amnesty-to-boko-haram-northern-elders-tell-buhari/>

²² Seth Kaplan, "How Inequality Fuels Boko Haram," *Foreign Affairs* February 5, 2015.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2015-02-05/how-inequality-fuels-boko-haram>

²³The emergence of violent extremism: less than one month before the London bombings of July 7, 2005, special force commanders and intelligence directors for the U.S. and its closest allies were summoned to the Special Operations Command Headquarters in Tampa, Florida, to discuss the new anti-terror approach. U.S. senior officials announced that the Global War on Terror, or GWOT, was over. Another acronym, SAVE, was to replace it. It stood for the Struggle against Violent Extremism. See Robert Fox, "GWOT is history. Now for SAVE," *The New Statesman*, 8 August 2005.

ideological, religious or political goals. This includes terrorism, other forms of politically motivated violence and some forms of communal violence. The user of violent extremist methods, no matter what their motivation, seeks to change through fear and intimidation rather than positive and democratic processes. In other words, Boko Haram's vision. While radical thinking is not a problem in itself, it becomes a threat to national security when citizens, residents or Nigerian groups advocate violence or use it to promote political views, ideological or radical religious.

Among the factors that can motivate or inspire individuals to resort to violence are real or perceived grievances, such as non-respect of human rights, corrupted elite supremacy, local movements inspired by Al-Qaeda, survival issues, poor presence and efficiency of Federal Institutions on the ground, inequality in distribution of revenues from natural resources and more. Akinola Olojo in his research called *Nigeria's Troubled North: Interrogating the Drivers of Public Support for Boko Haram*, examines the key drivers of public support for Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria He suggests that the effective formulation and implementation of a proactive (Nigerian) counter-terrorism strategy requires an incisive understanding of the political, socio-economic and religious/ideological drivers of public support for the group.²⁴

It is expected that the matters mentioned above will work in tandem with the security instrument, politics, development/economic approach and CVE measures. Applying on the ground separate plans has condemned them and the initiative, from the beginning, to failure and will enable the continuity of the chaos in the North-East of Nigeria.

²⁴ Akinola Olojo, *Nigeria's Troubled North: Interrogating the Drivers of Public Support for Boko Haram*. *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) – The Hague* (October 2013). <http://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Olojo-Nigerias-Troubled-North-October-2013.pdf>

Fighting Boko Haram - The Creation of the Joint Task Force (JTF)

In June 2011, the federal government created the Joint Task Force (JTF), a special military force composed of Nigerian armed forces and police, aimed at mitigating the threat of violent extremism. But the results on the ground were contradictory, the insurgency grew. According to civil society leaders, the JTF abuses have created growing resentment in communities, making community members more reluctant to provide information that could help curtail Boko Haram. One prominent civil society activist in the north said: "The abuse by the JTF has created more distance between the people and the government. Ordinary people are alienated by the activities of the JTF, so they don't want to cooperate."²⁵ As mentioned at the beginning of the article, it is clear that the Nigerian army, as cited above and according to Amnesty International's research, appears to have repeatedly used firearms against people when there was no imminent threat of death or serious injury and have intentionally used lethal force in circumstances other than when it was strictly necessary to protect life.²⁶

Despite the acclaimed success of the Nigerian CVE operations, paradoxically the terror campaign of Boko Haram is yet to abate; rather, it has become more sophisticated and lethal. The failure can be explained by: 1) The lack of intelligence/information on insurgent activities - poor intelligence services and lack of adequate means;²⁷ 2) The politicization of the discourse on

²⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Shehu Sani, President of the Civil Rights Congress of Nigeria, Abuja, May 30, 2012. See at: *Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Force Abuses in Nigeria*, *Human Rights Watch Report*, (2012), pp.58-71.

²⁶ Amnesty International Report, *Stars on their Shoulders. Blood on their Hands: War crimes Committed by the Nigerian Military*, June 3, 2015. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/stars-on-their-shoulders-blood-on-their-hands-war-crimes-committed-by-the-nigerian-military>

²⁷ We know today from Alex Badeh, the immediate past commander of the Nigerian military, who revealed that the effectiveness of the fight against the militant Islamist group Boko Haram, was greatly hampered by fifth columnists within the military who leaked sensitive information and operational plans to the terrorist sect. See, Nicholas Ibekwe, How fifth columnists in Nigerian military leaked operational plans to Boko Haram – ex-Defence Chief, *Premium Times*, 30.7.2015.

violent extremism, which led to differentiations between Muslim and Christian leaders on the approach to be taken; in fact lack of national consensus on the best approach to counter extremist groups dominate the discourse²⁸; 3) Human rights abuses by security forces at all levels. The army suffers from the 'hand relief on the trigger' phenomenon- no real distinction between enemies and innocent civilians; 4) Non-coercive CVE instruments deployed by the Nigerian government including the establishment of dialogue committees, security sector reforms, economic development initiatives, and youth empowerment programs.

These matters, without a doubt, undermine the efforts of the CVE. The phenomenon of violent extremism in Nigeria has deep roots in poor governance and the culture of corruption that pervades every level of Nigerian society and feeds extremist ideology. A CVE policy that does not address these drivers of violence is unlikely to succeed.

Declaration of a State of Emergency and the Rise of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)

Due to the increasing threats from Boko Haram and the inability of the army to contain the group, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan declared in Mai 2013 a state of emergency in three states (Borno, Yobe and Adamawa) after a series of deadly attacks perpetrated by Boko

<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/187538-how-fifth-columnists-in-nigerian-military-leaked-operational-plans-to-boko-haram-ex-defence-chief.html>

²⁸In this regard the Army's declaration on elders and leaders of Borno State and other States of the North-East are working against the resolve by the military and other security agencies to ensure they bring the terrorist activities of Boko Haram to an end by December of this year in accordance with President Muhammadu Buhari's directive, should be carefully considered since they are very influent in the North-East of Nigeria.

Kingsley Omonobi, Insurgency- Borno elders sabotaging our efforts – Army, *Vanguard*, September 27, 2015.

<http://odili.net/news/source/2015/sep/27/309.html>

Haram.²⁹ The military believed that calling a state of emergency in these three states would help to eliminate Boko Haram's safe havens and disrupt its operations. However, the state of emergency declarations may have also been due to political motivations connected to the 2015 elections.

In parallel, a new "Civilian Joint Task Force" (CJTF) has emerged in Boko Haram's main base in Borno, which has arrested Boko Haram members, including its commanders. The CJTF may become an effective alternative to the government's military JTF, which has been accused of human rights violations. Unlike the CJTF, the government's JTF is comprised of troops from all over Nigeria, who do not speak the local languages in North-East Nigeria (Hausa, Kanuri, and Shuwa [Arabic/Chadian]), or understand the local culture, religion, or geography. The rise of CJTF is the outcome of the poor performances of the military and other agencies fighting Boko Haram. These initiatives show the deep frustration in which the northern states are in (years of unsuccessful government attempts to stop the violence) as the military JTF failed to crush the insurgency and because they were killing innocent residents. The CJTF's aim is to also help the military JTF to identify and fight the real Boko Haram insurgents.³⁰

Nigeria's 'Soft Approach' to Countering Terrorism

²⁹The order, issued by President Goodluck Jonathan, applies to Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states in Northeastern Nigeria. Greg Botelho, Nigerian president declares emergency in 3 states during 'rebellion', *CNN* (15.5.2013) <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/05/14/world/africa/nigeria-violence/>

³⁰To differentiate themselves from the Boko Haram members and not to get killed in the crossfire between the Army JTF and the insurgents, CJTF fighters tie a piece of white nylon cloth on their left hand.

As with many other nations facing terrorism at different levels, the strategy developed in Nigeria took into account the root causes of terrorism. The approach was to understand the problem in order to apply the appropriate solutions. The counter terrorism strategy adopted the 'soft approach' which resulted in the development of a Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programme that is vertical and involves the three tiers of government: federal, state and local. The program also involves civil societies, academia, traditional, religious and community leaders. The program utilises existing structures inside and outside the government to deliver targeted program and activities that further the overall objective of stemming the tide of radicalism. The 'soft approach' which calls for addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, faces the hard and conservative line of military approach worldwide, led by the U.S. (The U.S., for instance, was never bought into the "soft" approach and continues to follow a military strategy, despite noticeable change in terminology). As a report by the Bipartisan Policy Center's National Security Preparedness Group concluded in 2011, the U.S. government has shown little interest in "soft" counter radicalization and de-radicalization policies.³¹ The U.S. government has also ironically been active in promoting "soft" de-radicalization programs abroad (such as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Nigeria), as well as the establishment of several regional centers and forums allegedly aimed at countering the global rise in violent extremism through "soft" power.³²

The Nigerian 'soft approach' would be divided into four streams: 1) The first stream is the de-radicalization of convicted terrorists, suspects awaiting trials, and those who might be released through court orders or government orders arising from the ongoing engagement and

³¹National Security Preparedness Group (NSPG), *Preventing Violent Radicalization in America* (Bipartisan Policy Center, June 2011). <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/NSPG.pdf>

³²Ibid.

dialogue with repentant terrorists; 2) The second stream will move from the government to society's approach on counter-terrorism thinking; 3) The third stream would be building capacity through strategic communication for the military and law enforcement agencies; 4) The fourth stream, based on the Nigerian understanding of the economic root causes of terrorism and global best practice in addressing them, will be working with the governors of the six North-Eastern states to design an economic revitalization program targeted at the states most impacted by terrorism (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe).³³ The division mentioned teaches us that through families, communities and faith-based organisations, resilience to violent extremism can be built.

In December 2013, the National Security Adviser Sambo Dasuki revealed that President Goodluck Jonathan tasked leaders of the North-East region and his office to develop a joint regional re-development plan which would serve as a foundation for a federal-state partnership to revitalize the region's economy. Towards this, Dasuki said his office had been working with the Ministries of Agriculture, Power, Finance, Works, Water Resources, Health, Education, Transport, Communication, Culture and Tourism, Industry-Trade and Investments, Solid Minerals Development, Science and Technology, Youth Development, and Lands and Housing, among others.³⁴ Apparently all the relevant agencies and institutions that are supposed to act on the ground in favor of the population are represented but are unable to agree on a way to improve life conditions, or any other successes. Boko Haram is the master of North-East Nigeria and threatens to expand its operations in all states of Nigeria as well as in neighboring countries.

³³ On March 20, 2014, the NSA (National Security Adviser) Mohammed Sambo Dasuki unveiled Nigerian Soft Approach to Countering Terrorism. For further details refer to his presentation at: <http://ireports-ng.com/2014/03/18/nigerias-soft-approach-to-countering-terrorism-by-mohammed-sambo-dasuki/> . Dasuki was in office 22 June 2012 – July 2015 under President Goodluck Jonathan.

³⁴ Ibid.

President Goodluck Jonathan lost the presidential election (April 5, 2015), which took place on the background of Boko Haram's insurgency in the North-East of the country, because of the frame of mind of the voters, which was determined by the economic conditions and level of poverty across the country as well as the continuous insurgency. After the kidnapping of nearly 279 schoolgirls from Chibok town in northern Nigeria, Jonathan Goodluck failed to realize how much this would capture the public's attention, both locally and internationally. His failure to speak out about the kidnapping for several weeks made him appear uncaring, and that failure contributed to ending his mandate as President.³⁵

Post Goodluck Jonathan era

The expectations of the newly elected President Muhammadu Buhari are skyrocketing. In some ways the great expectations are a result of his various declarations during the election campaign and after his victory, his statements on the importance for the future of Nigeria in tackling and eradicating Boko Haram's insurgency. As a former retired Nigerian Army Major General and Head of State of Nigeria (from 31 December 1983 to 27 August 1985) and former Borno State Governor (August 1975 – March 1976), we may assume that the priority he gave to eradicating the group is well established on intentions and general capabilities (military, civilian, regional cooperation, western countries support, etc.) Indeed, all are waiting to see effective military measures being taken against Boko Haram militants. In this context a short comparison with President Bush's call for Global War on Terrorism is inevitable.

³⁵ Is'haq Modibbo Kawu, President Goodluck Jonathan's Fallouts from Chibok, *Vanguard* (May 15, 2014). <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/05/president-goodluck-jonathans-fallouts-chibok/>

On 20 September 2001, President George W. Bush addressed a Joint Session of the U.S. Congress and the American people concerning the terrorist attacks of September 11 that had destroyed the World Trade Center in New York City, struck the Pentagon, and crashed a full passenger plane in western Pennsylvania. During his speech, President Bush identified the perpetrators of these attacks as the extremist Islamic terrorist group – al Qaeda. He declared that the U.S. "war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but does not end there."³⁶ Preparing the people of the U.S. for the road ahead, President Bush stated that the war on terror would not unfold in the same vein as Operation 'Desert Storm' (1991) with a decisive operation and swift conclusion. The U.S. war on terror would be a long road not decided by any one battle or campaign.³⁷ This statement informed both the military establishment and the American people that the notion of a decisive battle does not apply in this war on terror. To win this war, the U.S. would need to apply all the elements of its national power: diplomatic, informational, military, and economic.³⁸

It is agreed, that terrorist organizations are avoiding the decisive battle due to survival reasons and self-knowledge that in a decisive battle their chances against western super equipped and sophisticated armies are zero. Therefore they shift towards guerilla methods versus armies and terrorism against civilian populations. At this stage, many important questions were raised regarding Nigeria's policy as dictated by the new President regarding the eradication of Boko Haram within three months by the army. Questions arose, such as the President's awareness that Boko Haram operates as a hybrid terrorist organization. Hybrid terrorist organizations use legitimate political tools and terrorist tactics. The organization operates on the civilian plane of

³⁶ George W. Bush, "Address to Joint Session of Congress and the American People," available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1, Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense Publishing, 2000), pp. I-6.

da'wa, social welfare, and religious education; the military–resistance plane [jihad]; and the political plane - Islamisation and implementation of sharia laws all over the country, and does not look for the decisive battle.³⁹

Another question that arises comes from the LTTE experience that I stated as a successful counterinsurgency model. Has the Nigerian Army done its 'homework' and learned from the Sri Lankan Army's experience where they adopted the combat tenets of counterinsurgency warfare, and ceased searching for the decisive engagements with LTTE forces. Instead, small stealthy army units utilized satellite and signals intelligence to surprise LTTE units in their rear areas, which, in addition to killing LTTE fighters, sowed confusion and panic within the confident LTTE ranks.⁴⁰

In order to change the balance of power in the North-East of Nigeria, an earthquake should hit the Nigerian Army. Most of the fighting in the last two years has been carried out by the Nigerian Army's 7th Division, specifically created from three armored brigades in August 2013 for use against Boko Haram and headquartered in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State.⁴¹ However, the Nigerian Army suffers from endemic problems that explained its ineptitude.⁴² Any kind of aid to the Nigerian military is based on the false assumption that, like Western armed

³⁹ Vaeme Jensine Afokpa, *Regional Profits: The Rise of Hybrid Terrorism in West Africa Post 9/11*, Center for International Security and Cooperation: Stanford University (May 31, 2013), pp.20-36, 60-77. See also: Boaz Ganor, *The Hybrid Terrorist Organization and Incitement*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA), November 1, 2012. <http://jcpa.org/article/the-hybrid-terrorist-organization-and-incitement/>

For deeper info on Hybrid Warfare refer to: Frank Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington: The Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007).

⁴⁰ M.D. Nalapat, *Defeating Terrorism - Why the Tamil Tigers Lost Eelam...And How Sri Lanka Won the War*, Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), March 11, 2011.

<http://www.jinsa.org/publications/global-briefing/defeating-terrorism-why-tamil-tigers-lost-eelamand-how-sri-lanka-won-wa>

⁴¹ The 7th Division replaced the multi-service Joint Task Force (JTF), which had been criticized for its indifference to civilian casualties in the battle against Boko Haram.

⁴² For a detailed review of Nigerian Army endemic problems see: Andrew McGregor, *Conflict at a Crossroads- Can Nigeria Sustain Its Military Campaign against Boko Haram?* *Terrorism Monitor* Volume: 13 Issue: 13 (June 26, 2015), pp.7-11.

forces, it is neutral and under the control of civilian authorities. The Nigerian military is inseparable from the society in which it exists, prone to the same sectarianism, criminality and flaws as every other institution. Its ineptitude, corruption and indiscriminate violence, contributed to the empowerment of the insurgency. Some analysts said that 'Military is the Problem, not the Solution'.⁴³

Heading towards victory?

The continued attacks in North-East Nigeria and the increasing attacks in the Lake Chad Basin, along the border with Chad, Niger and Cameroon, and in the northern provinces of that country, have the potential of destabilizing the entire region, with far-reaching security and humanitarian consequences on the one hand, and the other hand shows that attrition methods renders the Nigerian army's operations ineffective.

Once Boko Haram's actions crossed borders and affected neighboring countries, the conflict became a regional one and needed to be handled differently. African leaders of the 54-nation African Union (AU) met and endorsed a West African plan for 7,500 troops and non-military staff to fight Boko Haram. The force, headquartered in Ndjamena, Chad, has an initial mandate lasting 12 months which can be renewed, and is headed by a Nigerian commander Major General Iliya Abbah, with a Cameroonian deputy and a Chadian chief of staff.⁴⁴ The

⁴³ Daniel Brett, Boko Haram: Military Is the Problem, Not the Solution, *HUFF POST POLITICS*, 20.9.2015.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/daniel-brett/boko-haram-nigerian-military_b_5490105.html

⁴⁴ African Union agrees to send 7,500 troops to fight Boko Haram, January 31, 2015.

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/1/31/africa-agrees-to-send-7500-troops-to-fight-boko-haram.html> ; see also: African-led counter-terrorism measures against Boko Haram, European Parliamentary Research Service, March 9, 2015.

<http://epthinktank.eu/2015/03/09/african-led-counter-terrorism-measures-against-boko-haram/>

mission of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is to create a secure environment, restoring state authority and facilitating humanitarian assistance in the affected areas.⁴⁵

The Nigerian army stepped up its offensive in January 2015 and initially made little progress against Boko Haram who occupies an area the size of Belgium (31.000 km²).⁴⁶ However, the terror group overplayed its hand, launching high-profile raids into neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. In February 2015, first Chad, and then Cameroon and Niger, joined in the offensive, scoring a string of startling victories, recapturing nearly all the occupied territory, according to authorities, and pushing the remaining fighters into the Sambisa Forest.⁴⁷ A counter-offensive by the armies of Chad and Nigeria has deprived Boko Haram of much of its gains. Chadian forces carried out the most effective operation, sweeping along the western shore

⁴⁵ The decision was taken in accordance with the report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission. To check the full report see: *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Regional and International Efforts to Combat the Boko Haram Terrorist Group and the way forward Peace and Security Council*, 484th meeting at the level of heads of state and government. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 29 January 2015.

<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-484-rpt-boko-haram-29-1-2015.pdf>

⁴⁶ The goal of the military campaign was to eliminate "safe havens and escape routes of terrorists in or out of Nigeria" and provide "once and for all comprehensive operations" to eliminate the Boko Haram threat. Originally, the operation was expected to be complete before the planned February 14 presidential elections. Refer to: Wale Odunsi, "Military set for final onslaught on terrorists," *Daily Post* (January 23, 2015). Regarding the coming elections President Goodluck Jonathan who is seeking to be re-elected on March 28, said Boko Haram was "getting weaker and weaker every day; I'm very hopeful that it will not take us more than a month to recover old territories that hitherto have been in their hands," *Agence France Press*, "Warning over president's 'victory' claims against Boko Haram," March 20, 2015. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3004004/Warning-presidents-victory-claims-against-Boko-Haram.html>

⁴⁷ For example, see the announcement made by the Defence Headquarters: Nnenna Ibeh, Nigerian military recaptures more communities from Boko Haram, *Premium Times*, February 27, 2015.

<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/177647-nigerian-military-recaptures-two-more-communities-from-boko-haram.html> ; Press Release: Nigerian troops recapture Buni Yadi, Buni Gari, from Boko Haram terrorists, *Premium Times*, March 7, 2015. <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/178131-nigerian-troops-recapture-buni-yadi-buni-gari-from-boko-haram-terrorists.html> ; Susannah Cullinane and Nana Karikari-apau, Nigeria's military says it has retaken Boko Haram 'caliphate' HQ, *CNN*, March 27, 2015. <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/03/27/africa/nigeria-boko-haram-gwoza/>; The Sambisa forest, a former colonial game reserve, is about 100 km (60 miles) from the village of Chibok, where Boko Haram abducted more than 250 secondary schoolgirls a year ago. The forest has an area of 60,000 km² (23,000 sq. mi); the forest is so thick that the sky can't be seen. Nigeria's military announced that it was raiding the Sambisa Forest. Liberating the forest might be the hardest part of the campaign against the group. Apart from the Sambisa forest, the group is also known to operate in the Mandara Mountains, which lie on the poorly-manned Cameroon-Nigeria border. Fighting the group here would require greater cooperation between both countries - something that has been lacking - to combat their common enemy.

of Lake Chad and retaking towns like Baga and Doron Baga, which had been largely destroyed by the insurgents.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the Nigerian army's 7th Division struck eastwards from Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, and recaptured Bama, the second largest city in the area.⁴⁹ Aided by mercenaries from South Africa,⁵⁰ Ukraine and the Czech Republic – who are believed to have piloted helicopter attacks and operated advanced weapons systems – the Nigerian forces wrestled back a large expanse of territory and lifted the threat to Maiduguri, which was previously under regular attacks. In all, about 30 towns and villages are believed to have been cleared and recaptured.

The Nigerian military's current efforts to pressure Boko Haram in the Sambisa Forest should deprive the group of its final major stronghold. If that is the case, the conflict has entered its most trying phase. The multinational forces will now have to hunt smaller groups of Boko Haram fighters staging guerrilla attacks, while simultaneously protecting liberated areas to sufficiently allow the government to rebuild state institutions. According to the Nigerian military, most of the territories controlled by Boko Haram have now been recaptured.

In spite of territorial losses (many important and symbolic strongholds e.g. - Gwoza)⁵¹ as well as losing fighters, munitions and food supplies, Boko Haram insurgents have intensified

⁴⁸ Greg Botelho, Nigerian military: Town where Boko Haram killed hundreds is liberated, *CNN*, February 21, 2015 <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/21/africa/nigeria-boko-haram/>

⁴⁹ Newly released footage from liberated Nigerian town Bama shows 'destruction, devastation and dead bodies' left by Boko Haram, *The Independent*, September 25, 2015. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/newly-released-footage-from-liberated-nigerian-town-bama-shows-destruction-devastation-and-dead-bodies-left-by-boko-haram-10138278.html>

⁵⁰ The South-African company STTEP, which stands for Specialized Tasks, Training, Equipment and Protection, managed by Colonel Eeben Barlow was recruited in top secrecy in January to train an elite strike group within Nigeria's disorganized, demoralized army. For more information on the mercenaries in Nigeria see: Collin Freeman, South African mercenaries' secret war on Boko Haram, *The Telegraph*, May 10, 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/11596210/South-African-mercenaries-secret-war-on-Boko-Haram.html>

⁵¹ Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau declared Gwoza the capital of a new Islamic caliphate after he seized the town in August 2015. Gwoza is located 130 kilometers (80 miles) southeast of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state

suicide bombings and other armed assaults at different locations in the beleaguered North-Eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, in Abuja areas as well in Lagos and in neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

President Muhammadu Buhari, since he took office on 29 May 2015, has been meeting with leaders of neighboring countries to coordinate counter-offensives to dislodge the insurgents. The President, who has made defeating Boko Haram his priority since taking office recently said that great strides had been made in the fight against Boko Haram, rounding on critics lamenting a lack of progress against the insurgents: "I think if you have been listening hard enough or if you have been to the North-East (of Nigeria), the military is really gaining ground, the rebels were 'virtually limited' to the remote Sambisa Forest area of Borno state, in North-East Nigeria."⁵²

The media role and factor

The current information environment facilitates the army as well as Boko Haram to gain strategic outcomes from the operations in the North-East. The state does not have a monopoly on information from the battlefield due to the globalization and modernization phenomenon that enabled a fast spread of improved technology accessible to everyone.⁵³ The environment

and is the birthplace of Boko Haram. On March 27, 2015, Nigeria's military claims it has destroyed the headquarters of Boko Haram in northeastern Gwoza town and drove the insurgents from all three northeastern states that had been an extremist stronghold. <http://news.yahoo.com/nigerian-military-claim-destroy-boko-haram-headquarters-113238749.html#>

⁵²Military gaining ground' against Boko Haram: Nigeria's Buhari, *Yahoo News*, September 7, 2015. <http://news.yahoo.com/military-gaining-ground-against-boko-haram-nigerias-buhari-181725915.html>

⁵³ The media environment has become a new instrument of power that can transcend national boundaries and government influence. Technology information affects military decision-making in a way never before experienced. At every level of media interaction with the military during times of conflict, there is always an inherent tension between the ostensible goals of impartial and balanced media reporting and the military objectives of the combatants. For detailed info refer to: Dennis M. Murphy, "*Fighting Back: New Media and Military Operation*," Center for Strategic Leadership, United States Army War Colleges: Carlisle Barracks: PA, November 2008, pp.4-5.

described facilitates the players to manipulate the outcome of the battle field by exploiting their strategic and tactical needs through live transmission of images and videos on-line.

Boko Haram's aspiration is to drag the Nigerian Army into populace areas. They rely on the assumption of a non-proportional reaction from the army may hurt innocent civilians and create severe collateral damage, facts and events that the army tries to avoid in order not to lose legitimacy.⁵⁴ In this regard, Martin Shaw explains that the enemy is aware of media exposure advantages in the war amongst people. Therefore, he (the enemy) takes steps, and uses the media exposure time to create images in order to consolidate his narrative and to affect the legitimacy of the military action.⁵⁵ Kenneth Payne concluded that the media is an instrument of war. Thus, western armies should search for ways to control it. He claimed that "winning the media war is crucially important to Western war-planners, and increasingly sophisticated methods for doing so have been developed – albeit with varying results."⁵⁶

As a result of the media's role and crucial factor in the battle field, the credibility of military and security services statements on victory over Boko Haram is not great. It is hard to confirm the Nigerian military's claims of success as it is difficult for foreigners, including the diplomatic community and the media,⁵⁷ to access the areas where Boko Haram traditionally operates in Nigeria.⁵⁸ In this regard, former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, made a

⁵⁴ In this subject refer to: Edward N. Luttwak, "Dead-end: Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice," *Harper's Magazine* (February 2007), pp. 33-42.

⁵⁵ Martin Shaw, "Risk-Transfer Militarism, Small Massacres and the Historic Legitimacy of War," *International Relations* Vol. 16, No. 3 (December 2002), pp. 60-343.

⁵⁶ Kenneth Payne investigated the role of the media in the second Iraq war in 2003. Refer to his article "The Media as an Instrument of War," *Parameters* 35, No.1 (2005), pp. 81-93.

⁵⁷ Much of Nigeria's news media is itself divided along ethnic lines and, outside of a handful of responsible news outlets, is addicted to lurid allegations and dark conspiracy theories. Some even portray Boko Haram as a government plot to destroy the largely Muslim north, while others suspect northern politicians are secretly supporting the insurgents to discredit President Jonathan, a southerner and Christian.

⁵⁸ Nigerian journalists are not allowed to embed with Nigerian forces and few reporters venture into disputed territories to observe firsthand.

remark saying that talks of victories by Nigerian troops against Boko Haram must be taken with caution, even skepticism, especially with the difficulty in accessing the conflict zone by the media and members of the diplomatic community. The former Ambassador said: " Military claims of success must be viewed with caution if not skepticism. Throughout the struggle between Boko Haram and the Nigerian state, beginning with the former's re-emergence in 2011, security service spokesmen have made exaggerated claims of success."⁵⁹

Judging the credibility of Nigerian military speakers may be risky, therefore it is suggested to wait and see what information emerges in the coming future concerning the Sambisa forest where the Chibok girls are supposedly being held. In other words, if the army forces will free some of the Chibok girls or show part of them as wives and children of the terrorists themselves, we will we know for sure where the army stands vis-à-vis Boko Haram. From the actual situation on the battle field where Boko Haram is losing ground and the army claims victory, we can learn a few things, such as: Boko Haram is largely a local phenomenon powered by political interests.⁶⁰ The imminent question raised from that situation is the sudden helplessness of Boko Haram insurgents, which until very recently, was widely feared. This suggests that resources, such as those that paid for its state-of-the-art equipment, are running out. Boko Haram needs more money, more than it has earned from raiding banks in areas it took under its control and the ransoms paid for hostages. This brings to light one of the most important tools in counter-terrorism: financial resources. Find and destroy the financial resources

⁵⁹ U.S. Diplomat, John Campbell Dismisses Claims of Military Victories Over Boko Haram, *International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR)*, September 16, 2015.

<http://icirnigeria.org/u-s-diplomat-john-campbell-dismisses-claims-of-military-victories-over-boko-haram/>

⁶⁰ Nigeria's elite has a history of exploiting and arming militant groups to push through their own interests, be they in the Niger Delta or elsewhere, such as the northern regions.

of the group and you will eradicate it. This is probably the case, without neglecting the military pressure made by the Nigerian Army and the multinational force.

Summary

It is clear that Boko Haram's insurgency will not just disappear; no matter how successful military operations are. Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet capable of ending the insurgency.

The use of military force should be regarded as the means. All it can do (the army) is buy enough breathing room in order for the government to devise comprehensive solutions to the area and its various problems. Nigeria may win the war against Boko Haram, but could find that winning the peace will require different tactics that are part of the CVE's policy to be implemented. Factors like poverty, inequality, unemployment, corruption and lack of education must be immediately addressed in the freed areas, otherwise local populations will remain vulnerable to extremist ideology.⁶¹ It is exactly about this situation that Virginia Comolli, a research fellow for security and development in IISS and the author of *'Boko Haram: Nigeria's Islamist Insurgency'* questioned whether the military victories were sustainable. "It's only a military approach: there is very little being done to tackle the underlying grievances in the area," she said. "It might be that they're winning a battle, but I'm not sure they're winning the war."⁶²

⁶¹Regarding the factors mentioned above, and others, I must say that President Buhari is fully aware of the situation as he describes it while addressing to General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 28, 2015. In his long speech, the President mentioned the war against Boko Haram, the establishment of a multinational joint task force to confront, degrade and defeat Boko Haram, and all others challenges threatening Nigeria that his new government is committed to tackle in order to bring peace and enhance the economic development as well. To see the full text of his speech at the 70th session of the united nations general assembly new york, 28th September 2015, refer to: <http://africanspotlight.com/2015/09/28/full-text-president-buharis-speech-at-70th-session-of-un-general-assembly-%E2%80%AA%E2%80%8Eunga%E2%80%AC/>,

⁶² Virginia Comolli, *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Islamist Insurgency* (London: A Hurst Publication, 01 June 2015); See also "The Regional Problem of Boko Haram," *Survival Global Politics and Strategy*, Volume 57 Number 4 | August–September 2015. pp. 109-117.

I would end this article with some skepticism about real military victory over Boko Haram and the future by saying that even if Nigeria's officers suddenly became wise and capable, and if their heavy armored gear rolled Boko Haram out of Nigeria forever, it would do little to solve the poverty, inequality and political resentments that gave rise to all this in the first place. Until the Nigerian state can actually serve its northern citizens, even a stunning victory would only perpetuate defeat.